

To Death We Fight

by The Unpredictable Muse

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Summary: The Covenant finally attacked Earth. They didn't expect to meet The Collective, a secret, underground organization comprised of their collage of races. The Collective meets Covenant head on - with every hope of victory. A 1 shot until I figure out how to continue it.

1. Live Another Day

LIVE ANOTHER DAY

The situation was dire. Headquarters was about to become a giant tomb for anyone unfortunate to become trapped its underground tunnels. Soldiers of the Collective, human, dragon born, werewolf, and vampire, rushed to evacuate as a Corvette appeared on the horizon. Weapons rested in their hands, some taking their natural form to engage the enemy in combat. The leader of the Collective, Chauncey Adams, the first 'child' of Priscilla, the original vampire, held a modified rifle and had two magazines of ammo aside from the magazine in the weapon. She lead the fleeing soldiers, bursting through the one locked and hidden storm doors.

Emerging in what was once a warehouse that stored goods, debris towered on either side " further proof of the Covenant's mission to eradicate humans like humans tried to eradicate cock roaches. Taking a knee behind a particularly large pile of stone and twisted metal, she motioned for her second, a vampire with Priscilla's son's blood running through her veins. " Selene, we have to get a messenger to the Alpha site. If we don't, then humanity is doomed." Selene nodded, ducking as dust coated the air and floated down over them. " I want you to lead the team to the site. Take Michael and Alex with you. If they see you and Alex working together, they'll know it's my will."

The emerging soldiers took cover as the ground shook, and then the back section of the warehouse gave way, revealing a wide crack that

filled in on itself. Dust and dirt clouded the air and limited visibility.

Selene glanced back at the larger mass of soldiers. Reaching down to both thighs, she gripped the two Beretta's, her preferred weapon. " Try not get killed, won't you?" She asked before rushing back to the group.

Checking her magazine of ammunition, Chauncey doubted she was getting away from this one without a search and capture party. Alex appeared from the back and started to argue with Selene, glancing at his mother before Selene grabbed a handful of scruffy jacket and put him against the pile of debris. A sharp piece of metal jabbed his back. Chauncey couldn't hear what was said, but when she turned back around, Selene, Michael, and Alex were gone.

Lucian ran up to her side and activated his 'borrowed' energy sword. " Your orders?" He looked to her, even when she was much younger than him.

" Kill every single Covenant warrior." She answered, switching the safety switch to off. " They've killed enough of our people. It's time they suffered losses."

The smell of wet dog permeated the air ever so slightly, evident to all but the humans. Silence fell over the warehouse area. Wind whistled eerily through what had once been a thriving district. It pained Chauncey to have to spill more blood, even if that blood was the blood of the murderers. Lucian sniffed the air and snarled, spinning the sword around to cross blades with an invisible foe. Chauncey, still wearing the official seal around her neck, felt a large two toed foot connect her upper chest and sent her flying against the debris. A piece of metal speared her shoulder.

Bullets sprayed the air as she fired in pain and instinct. A drop of bright indigo colored blood hit the ground. A malicious smile spread across her lips as she pulled herself off the metal and emptied the magazine into the enemy. The soldiers split up, the enemy attacking on all sides. Chauncey barely had time to dodge a falling beam before draining another magazine into empty air and fleeting flesh and armor. Charging forward, she knew exactly where the warrior was.

Lucian roared as he changed from man to wolf. The transformation temporarily paralyzed his enemy " enough time for Lucian to change completely. Lunging at his enemy, Lucian dug his claws into the exposed areas of the Sangheili warrior's armor. Claws met flesh, and that was the last Chauncey saw before she sprinted past the chaotic battlefield for cleaner killing ground. Her legs propelled her past what was once the front wall of the warehouse before she dived out of the wave of an incoming plasma grenade. It connected to the edge a stone chunk. She hit the ground as fine dust exploded in the immediate area, along with a concussive blast and heat.

Rolling over, she braved it. Her ears rung, but her body was attuned for trouble "and she flung the rifle in time to avoid a clean cut across the neck. The blade cut through the rifle, leaving her with the butt end of it. Dropping it, she lashed out with one fist, connecting with and smashing armor. Her hand crumpled under impact, and she withdrew. The warrior fell back in shock. The dust in the air

cleared long enough for her to spot the anger in the bluish brown skinned warrior.

The nearby battle rang out in perfect clarity, but she didn't have time to pick out every single hit, blast, and slice. A war cry, another roar, told her that Lucian was still fighting. Without Selene to back her up, Lucian was the assigned back up. As long as he lived, leadership would pass into capable hands. Leaping to her feet, she shook loose the mess of bones and winced from the immense pain running through her arm. Note for next time " don't punch Sangheili armor with full strength, especially with unprotected hands.

The warrior growled and charged her. She leapt out the way, rolling and landing on her feet. The hum of the sword swept past her head and then her chest as she dodged each blow, waiting for the right moment to grab the warrior's thick, muscled arm. Latching on as he came down with a blow meant to cut her from head to toe, she stopped his arm. Incredible strength against incredible strength remained locked in a stalemate for three seconds before she twisted and pulled it's hand out of alignment. The warrior cried out in great anguish, and lashed out with a great kick.

Narrowly avoiding it, she didn't notice the second warrior. Holding on and refusing to give up her only advantage, she climbed up, using the arm as a rope, and delivered a hard kick to the armor. Her boots connected with the armor, knocking the warrior backward. She held on, the warrior falling onto its back. Stomping down hard again, she turned her foot to its' exposed neck. Bringing her foot across the large throat, she heard the last cries of life escape its mandibles.

" For everyone you've murdered in blind belief!" She stomped one last time, satisfied with the additional breaking of bones. Releasing the arm, she turned around. A hand wrapped around her throat and an energy cut through her side. The top half pierce her heart, barely pumping blood. Gasping in shock, she clutched at the hand gripping her throat. With her left arm, she attempted to hammer on the arm holding her suspended in air. It lowered only an inch, but she wasn't ready to die.

Everything started to turn black, her strikes growing weaker. A strong roar revived her enough to hear something else " an explosion worthy of a Spartan. A small smile shaped her lips. Even if she died, she would be replaced by someone more powerful.

She hit the ground as a hail of bullets embedded in the warrior's back. Crawling away, she didn't see the armored figure before it was kneeling near her and dragging her away. Another explosion elsewhere temporarily pulled their attention to the horizon. A great red blaze lit up the sky as a plume of smoke blocked out the rising moon.

And then it was over as quickly as it started. Less than seventeen minutes passed from the destruction of the headquarters to where she lay now. Looking up at the armored Spartan, Chauncey felt like she was looking up at another Sangheili warrior. The Spartan leaned over and offered a hand. Chauncey accepted it and pulled herself to her feet.

" Thanks." She said, rubbing her neck. It was too close for comfort. Her thoughts were then with her soldiers, praying that many of them

survived.

" Damage report." The Spartan demanded.

Chauncey stopped at the two Sangheili bodies, picking up two grenades, a plasma rifle, a carbine, and one energy sword. Carrying the equipment, Chauncey winced as the rifle made contact with her crushed fist. " Well, their armor isn't impossible to put a fist through. It just takes two to make flesh contact." She wished she could have laughed at her response, except that it was her hand throbbing and in dire need of the moonlight to heal it.

" And the headquarters?" The Spartan pressed.

Chauncey turned at the waist to stare up at the super soldier. " Obviously collapsed. Extent of damage unknown. Losses unknown. MIA and KIAs unknown. And a whole hell lot more of unknowns." The Spartan seemed to catch the hint because the super soldier back off.

Coming to the sight of the battle, Chauncey considered the bodies strewn about so recklessly. Thankfully Lucian was among those providing first aid. She didn't even care that he wasn't wearing any clothes, unlike the Spartan who followed her. Entering the scene, she started an equipment and weapon pile. Tavaris, one of the dragon born warriors, stopped her as she picked up a loose plasma grenade. He grabbed her wrist and studied her crushed hand. Without a word, he waved his hand over it. Muscle mended almost simultaneously, leaving three fourths of the skin to regrow.

Shaking her hand, she offered a small smile. " You're a good soldier."

Tavaris bowed his head. " You know as well as I if I let anything happen to you that Vardos would have my head."

Vardos. Where was he now? She hid the worry and touched his shoulder with her newly mended hand to show that she was already feeling better. " You know as well as I that Vardos wouldn't want you expending your energy on someone who doesn't have mortal wounds." Picking up the grenade, she carefully handled it.

Four were injured, but all of the Sangheili warriors lay dead. It was a strike squad, a skilled one at that. They just didn't count on one thing " something other than humans putting them on their death beds and on the road to the Great Journey. A somber mood fell over the group as Chauncey gathered everyone together in prayer, in memory of the fallen as well for the future. When she muttered 'Amen', everyone lifted their heads. They were warriors. They still had to fight even when others fell.

2. Used

Ultra Vatu' Manulee watched the battle of the barren city from the Corvette, against his better instinct to join in. It had long since been known that the site of the battle was also the suspected headquarters of the enemy they only knew as The Collective. Rumors of it being lead by a woman disturbed him, as no woman's place was on the battlefield, and he only now confirmed them after watching the one wearing the seal kill his younger brother, SpecOps Minor Islu '

Manulee seemingly with her bare hands. He didn't allow his great outrage for his brother's death show on his calm visage, but the rage boiled his indigo colored blood.

The human female would pay for his death. He would avenge his fallen brother, even if he had to defy the Ship Master's orders to do so! Clenching his hand into a fist against his chest, he bowed his head and muttered a prayer. May the Great Journey cleanse his brother's defeat. Still he could not believe that a human had killed his brother without a weapon. The view did not lie, even as it was hindered by the great explosions of debris in the air.

" Patience, Warrior. All in due time." Ship Master Hansou ' Manulee warned him. Vatu turned and nodded in recognition and respect. " We came for what we needed."

" I request that it is I who has the honor of slaying-"

" You will not slay this human. She will be taken alive. If you must, then you can torture the information from her."

Vatu nodded again, keeping his eyes lowered the entire time. It was not common the Ship Master presented himself among the crew, and when he did, it was for a strong reason. Vatu could only guess the reason he was on the bridge now was to witness the defeat. Yet, the Ship Master did not appear troubled by the loss. Had the Ship Master expected this? Fresh rage filled him as he thought of the warriors who needlessly sacrificed themselves.

To witness the Great Journey and be welcomed into its embrace was every true warrior's wish, and to die honorably in combat remained without question the only acceptable death. Yet, the thought that warriors died needlessly where other, greater battles could be fought caused him to question the tactical soundness of his leader's plan. Surely the Ship Master was using his experience instead of the tactical orders of the San Shyuum, who had relinquished their primary role as warriors long ago and resigned it to the Sangheili warriors.

Yet, he could not question the strength of this new enemy. They were not built like the super soldiers genetically created to specifically combat the Covenant. Not a single warrior returned from the battle, signaling a catastrophic, unexpected, and sickening defeat. The image of the human killing his brother returned, which only off set his suspicions further. The female was a slip of a human, and she shouldn't have been able to do what she did. Was she the newer generation of the super soldiers? Or was she something else?

He had little time to dwell on the mystery at hand. Another warrior called him over to the navigation console. The two warriors input coordinates and waited for the Corvette to jump into the void. A report to the higher command was necessary in order to continue with their missions. Since they directly reported to Fleet Master Anslo' Auslee, their missions had increased in difficulty and quantity. Little rest had been had since they fought off the flood at the first battle site, Spartans at a facility that was supposed to be abandoned, and then here.

A slight thrust swayed him as the ship jumped into the void. He straightened his spine and resumed his duties as navigation officer.

Keeping an eye on the projected course, his thoughts tirelessly returned to the defeat they had been dealt. A worthy foe to be certain, but would that worthy foe face them on the next battlefield? He hoped so, for his brother would be avenged two fold and then some!

Ship Master Hansou 'Manulee could have cut the tension with his energy sword if he chose. Instead of he faced the tension with certainty that they obtained a victory in place of the defeat many warriors rushed to assume. He sacrificed a strike group to obtain what he wanted " the identity of The Collective's leader " and that sacrifice reaped rewards. In his quarters, he prepared the report for Fleet Master Anslo ' Auslee.

No words could soften the news of defeat, but he did his best. What he prepared was something between persuasive and blunt. The report appeared on the holographic screen in front of him was half finished, yet he could not wait. He had lost ten high skilled warriors in what should have been a battle in their favor. Instead, even he was staggered by the losses and the swiftness of the battle. This foe " female she may be " was the greatest human he had crossed with the exception of 'Demon' himself. The words came to him as he envisioned the battle exactly as it passed.

In a matter of minutes, he stared at a rough finished report. Starting at the top, he read paragraph by paragraph. It would have to do.

Dropping out of the void, they exited exactly where they planned. The Corvette was the only vessel in the area, but soon another would join them. Pacing his quarters, Hansou knew that if the Fleet Master ordered victory, then he would sacrifice every last warrior to achieve it. Something bothered him, something about the battle itself.

Humans didn't kill Sangheili warriors with their hands. Even the super soldiers used their strange knives, which meant that this leader " whatever her name was " wasn't human. She was modified. The Fleet Master and the Councilors needed to know of this, before they overlooked more humans. They had to root out where these modified humans were coming from and what was being done to them " and stopping it at all costs.

The opening of his quarter's doors broke him from his thoughts. He looked to find his second, Ultra Malek, waiting to be acknowledge before entering. " What news do you bring?" He demanded.

The warrior fell to one knee and lowered his head. " The Fleet Master's vessel has arrived."

" Arrange the transportation."

" Yes, Ship Master." The warrior left him alone once more. He touched the largest button on the console, submission, and then moved to the docking bay. Eyes lowered as he passed warriors. The loss of his Special Operations Sangheili Minor, SpecOps for short, warriors rubbed the wrong way. Like Ultra Vatu, he felt the rage well within as well as shame. Knowingly sending warriors to their deaths when victory was not expected never became easier.

Entering the docking bay, the sight of a phantom ready for takeoff greeted him. An escort of four warriors waited patiently for him. He touched the sword handle on his waist for reassurance. He did not wish to protect himself against traitors, but he wasn't sure who he could trust with malicious rumors spreading through the warrior ranks. Entering the Phantom and locking himself in place, he waited for the wings to close and then the liftoff.

His heart rate accelerated with each second passing. He had sent ten good warriors to their deaths, and he expected those warriors to be honored.

Fleet Master Anslo Auslee' waited for Ship Master Hansou 'Manulee, anxious to hear if any progress had been made. He wished to report to his superiors that they were no longer ignorant of the threat tearing a hole through their forces on too many and random battlefields. If he obtained the information as to why, who, and how, then he might gain rank as well become eligible for better missions, ones that didn't keep him from the front lines of combat. His eyes rested on the other Corvette and the long awaited report.

Ten minutes later, the Ship Master entered the bridge with an escort of two Ultras. The Fleet Master turned his attention to the new arrival and the Ship Master lowered to one knee and bowed his head. "I bring the report, Fleet Master."

Turning, Anslo pulled up the report from the collective database of information. Pulling it up on his private screen, he read each word twice before deleting the report. Disturbing and intriguing. His superiors would find great interest in this. "You will capture this..human." He ordered the Ship Master, the Ship Master appearing to expected this. "You are dismissed."

The Ship Master left the bridge with his new orders, and Anslo moved to his quarters. He began his report of how he and his warriors had obtained the information first hand. The fool Ship Master would expend his warriors while he would gain from the fool's efforts. The beauty of his plan was that only a select few of his crew was in on the plan, beside himself.

End
file.